Abstract: This is an in-progress preliminary study that will help to identify problems and clarify expectations and needs for the pre-service teachers who must take a required course named EDCT203 (Technology Applications in Education) in the college of Education at Ohio University. The study shall shed some light on many aspects of the course preparations including syllabus design, change of learning and teaching strategies, and software selections.

Introduction

Students in the teacher education programs are expected to meet the National Educational Technology Standards for teachers. However, several groups, such as the American Council on Education (ACE, 1999), the CEO Forum of Educational Technology (1999), the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE, 1999), and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 1997), have reported that schools of education are not adequately preparing their students as pre-service teachers to effectively integrate technology in their future classrooms. To solve this problem, many schools offer some basic compulsory courses to provide their students with the fundamental technological skills and knowledge necessary for their future careers. The EDCT203 (Technology Applications in Education) is such a course that has been offered many years to the sophomores in the College of Education at Ohio University. However, due to the quick development of new technologies, some of the software used for the courses has been outdated. In addition, because of the wide accessibilities to computers, new students who are going to take this course have higher levels of computer literacy and skills and therefore, their expectations for this course may differ greatly from former students. Starting in the fall of 2003, new technology fees were charged to all the students of the College of Education at Ohio University. These fees, together with the federal grant will be used for computer lab innovation and software renewal and updates for the technology classes like EDCT 203.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the problems of this course, examine the potential need of the perspective students and help the instructors of this course to redefine the course content, make better software selection, and change class teaching strategies.
Participants

Participants of this study will be the freshmen, the juniors, the seniors, and former graduates from the college of Education at Ohio University.

Data Collection

An email survey on students’ background (technology experience and training) and expectations for the EDCT 203 prior to registering for the course will be given to the freshmen students to define their entry level and possible need for the course.

An email survey on students’ technology experiences and skills learned in the coursework of EDCT 203 and their perception on this course will be given to the juniors and seniors in the College of Education.

An email survey on former students’ technology experiences and skills learned in their working positions and their perception on the effectiveness of the EDCT203 will be sent to the former graduates of the College of Education at Ohio University.

To further understand the problems and needs for the course reform, several unstructured group or individual follow-up interviews will be given to volunteers from each participating group after the surveys. Conducting this kind of interview will allow the researchers to uncover new clues, to open up new dimensions of a problem and to secure accurate and inclusive accounts from informants that are based on personal experiences. (Holstein & Gubriun, 1995).

Data Analysis

Data analysis will be divided into the following stages: 1) organizing the data, 2) generating categories, theme and patterns, and 3) drawing conclusions. Researchers will also use the course syllabi and the course textbook to make sense of the collected data.

References: